



THE JACG NEWSLETTER

JACG

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THE JERSEY ATARI COMPUTER GROUP

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MARCH 1989

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Please note that the premier issue of Z*NET has been included with the JACG Newsletter. It represents a lot of work by Ron Kovacs (of Z*MAG fame), and I look to its success. As to OUR Newsletter...we (hopefully) should have a new editor for the April 1989 (not 1990!) issue. I have so many places to channel my limited energies...it IS about time for someone else to take over.

Relative to both the Newsletter and the JACG...as I've said until "blue in the face"...they are what you make them to be, and without you, the concerned membership...they are nothing. They are there for you, for your enjoyment, your education, your creative outlet and your emotional outlet. When they no longer have any meaning to you, and subsequently lose your support...they will lose their viability and fade away.

SUPPORT THE JACG!

Supportfully Yours,

Dave Noyes

D. Noyes

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEXT MEETING

APRIL 8, 1989

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Gary Gorski

PRESIDENT REPORT MARCH 1989

This month's report has been very hard to start because of all the activity that has happened since last month. Most important is the planning that is going on to bring a REGIONAL meeting together at Bell Labs. Tentatively the date of the "Regional Meeting" will be September 8th. Atari has promised to be represented by Sig Hartmann, and Cindi. Some of the area clubs that have been invited are:

1. Ol' Hackers
2. ACE-NNJ
3. LIAUG
4. MDM
5. JACS
6. (More to come)

I have been in touch with a representative from each group. Hopefully, the outcome will prove to be something positive. Details on the agenda are still being decided on. One thing for sure, is that we will need volunteers. Please contact Dave, John, Sam or myself as to what you can help with!! And watch this column for late breaking details!

Atari Safari is still planned for the June meeting. At the present time, we still only have 4 volunteers - MORE are needed. Please support YOUR club and do a demo, or write a Newsletter article. Do it today!

SPECIAL THANKS goes to SOFT-LOGIK for donating one of this month's door prizes, a copy of PAGE STREAM. The lucky winner will have to write a review which will appear in our Newsletter. Good luck to all, (hope that I win). Some of the door prizes for the April meeting will be:

1. Habaview
2. Power Edit
3. Logo an introduction and more to be added.

Remember, in order to have a chance to win a door prize, you must be present at the meeting. You can get your door prize ticket from Mike Hochman. Extra tickets are "EARNED" by writing articles for the Newsletter, and doing demos!! Please see Mike for details. Well, until next month Happy Computing!

Gary

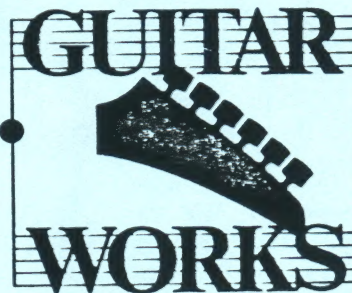
**SUPPORT YOUR CLUB
AND GET SOMETHING
OF VALUE AT THE
SAME TIME**

NOISE FROM NOYES

by Dave Noyes

Have you bought any commercial 8-bit ATARI software lately? You know, there are still some new titles finding their way to the marketplace...I should say, trickling to the marketplace! The volume of new material has dropped drastically, as has number of developer/providers. This is not to say that the demise of the ATARI 8-bit is just around the corner. What it attempts to say is that the tradition of "well-heeled", high-priced, amply-staffed, "big"-named, "wow" packaging, and profusely advertising companies is fast departing the scene; to be replaced by one, two or a few "employee", shoestringed but enthusiastic, last gasp, diehard, creative, plain packaging and word-of-mouth companies. To mention a few: MicroMiser, Reeve, TCS, and No Frills. There are others.

Simultaneous with this change is a rise in Shareware, Freeware, and Public Domain software. The void is being filled, somewhat. Whether that somewhat is enough to either satisfy current 8-bit ATARIANS, or foster a future generation (even a few years!) is conjecture that even I (an eternal optimist) will not venture to hazard a guess. Here's to the future!



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PAGESTREAM

REVIEWED BY Eric Jacoves

Pagestream is the latest DESKTOP PUBLISHING program for the Atari 520 and up computers in the ST line.

Ten fonts are included with the program. The font used here is the COLOMBIA version and the title above is in the Artistic font at 36 points. A point is a measure of letter size and stands for 1/72 of an inch. Thus the Pagestream title is 36/72 of an inch large, while the current text is 12/72 of an inch tall. The range of text size is from the small 3 point size to the largest 216 point size and is suitable for poster or other large requirements.

Ten fonts are included and are...

Helvetica

Ltrgothic

Univroman

Tyme

Colombia

Saturn

Tomhud

ARTISTIC

ORIENTAL ORIENTAL

Oriental

Each of the font names are printed in the respective font at 12 points. The original program named Publishing Partner and now named pagestream junior could import graphics in several formats including the .TNY format. This TNY format is widely used on Bulliten boards as it is a highly compressed format. Alas and Alac Pagestream does not recognize the .TNY format. To use the .TNY pictures you will have to convert them all to the DEGAS format which Pagestream accepts.

In this version of Pagestream text will flow around graphic objects. But first you must import the graphics. To do this you have to click on the Object box in the toolkit at the right side of your screen. The Object box is the square box with the diagonal crosslines. Then a dialog box will appear with the path /PSPICS/*.* and that directory is empty so you have to change the path to /*.* and put in your graphics disk. The files on your graphic disk will be listed and you

can pick one. The disk will spin for a fairly long time until the screen changes to the graphic Import window and you must select the portion of the image that you wish to capture. you do this by placing the cursor at the top left of the image you want and then you click once on the left mouse button, a square box will appear, move the mouse to include the entire area of the picture to be captured then click the left button again to freeze the capture area. Next close the graphic window by clicking on the left top close square. Next choose Copy from the Edit menu go back to text and click once in the text box where you want your image.

Then choose Paste from the Edit menu and with the mouse place the image where you want it in the text window. After all of this you will have the picture in your document.

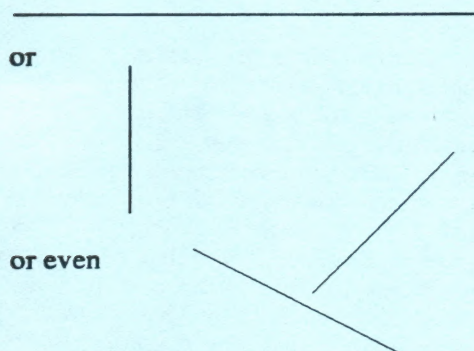


You can then move it anywhere you wish with the mouse, just click inside the graphic window and move it where you want it. The text should flow around the graphic window if you choose text runaround from the object menu and you can have the text run around both sides of the picture or only the left side or only the right side. I chose the left side for this picture, you can actually move a graphic object right into a text area and the runaround will take effect. You are supposed to be able to rotate text as well so here is the first attempt.

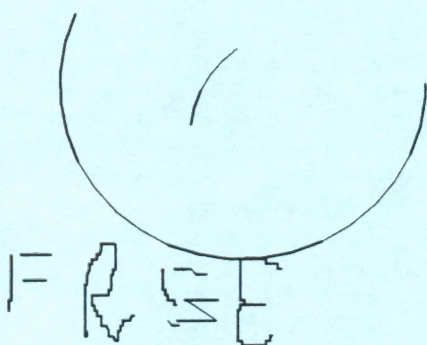
TIME TO BEND

HELLO THERE

BUT text can be rotated if and only if it is **NOT** within a text window. Then you can rotate and twist the image whether it be text or a picture. Lines can be drawn as in



and you can use the line capacity to draw within the program. To this end you have arcs



HAND drawing as well. The results of Free hand are rather crude but with time you might get to be quite good. I would rather do my drawing in degas and import the graphic into Pagestream.

Text can be set to automatically route from text window to text window so that if you run out of space at the end of a column you will automatically pick up in the next column or on the next page. Alternately you can tell the program to route the text in a special way and have the text from page 2 column 1 route to page 7 column 2. This doesn't strike me as a good way to go but all the newspapers and magazines do it. Kerning of the text can be set up as you like it, Kerning is the white space between letters and the

white space between lines can also be adjusted if you do not like the defaults set by Pagestream. The normal or default mode is to left justify text. That means the text will start at column 1 and if a word is too big to fit at the end of the line it will be moved to the next line. It is also possible to automatically hyphenate words so that the text will end at the exact end of the line and will be both left and right justified. **TEXT CAN APPEAR IN OUTLINE MODE, BACK SLANTED ITALICIZED OR DOUBLE UNDERLINED THE SHADOW TEXT AND BOLD LET YOU CUSTOMIZE YOUR DOCUMENT.**

The backslant only works if the text is not in a text window, in that respect its just like the rotation command. All of the other text modes will function in a text window.

Page two in this review is in the Tyme font at 10 points to show the two clearly readable fonts in the package. I might add that the printout is on the Hewlet Packard Deskjet printer at 300 dots per inch and is much clearer than a normal dot matrix printer can produce.

There is a spelling checker built into the program but it requires that the dictionary be loaded before the spell checker can be run. Unfortunately there is nothing in the manual that tells you how to load it. Also the hyphenation feature works only if the hyphenation -dictionary is loaded and that is not in the manual either.

To change the characteristics of a word or line or series of lines you highlight the text that you wish changed by placing the cursor at the start of what you want to change and press the left mouse button. Holding the button down move the mouse over the text to be changed, release the mouse button at the end of the ,to be changed text, The text will appear in reverse video and you can now do several things with it... 1, change the point size, 2. change the font and point size by clicking on the STYLE drop down menu. The Font / point option will let you change to any other font at any other or the same point size. In addition you can make the text **bold, DOUBLE UNDERLINED, ITALICIZED, LIGHT MIRROR, OUTLINE, REVERSE SHADOW STRIKE THROUGH SINGLE UNDERLINE AND EVEN UPSIDE DOWN AND EVEN UPSIDE DOWN**



All of the functions on the previous page were accomplished with one drop down menu, the Style Menu, one of nine drop down menus controlled by the mouse. The Format drop down menu allows you to change the highlighted text to ^{super script} or of course _{sub script} and you can switch them around as well. You also control the left and right indent and the line and or character spacing where you increase or decrease the space between letters and the space between lines. Your text can be blocked left, right or centered. You can also make the text upper case or lower case or even Capitalized where the first letter in each word is upper case.

The FILE menu lets you create a new document, or OPEN an existing document that you have saved. You can append different documents together, SAVE Documents that are already named or save the current document under a new name. This you must do for all of your new documents as when you open a new document there is no name given to the work of art until you save it. In this menu you will import text from your word processor and the Pagestream supports several word processors such as Wordwriter ST or any word processor that can save text in ASCII form. You will also import all of your pictures with the IMPORT GRAPHICS command. Exporting text falls here and this is when you create something in Pagestream and want to use it in your Word processor, or export graphics so that you can draw something in Pagestream and pass it on to DEGAS for colorization. You do all of your printing here as well and you have a set of Disk Utilities which will Format a disk, Rename a file, Delete a file, Make a new folder, Remove a folder and determine the free disk space so you will know if you have enough space to save your document or format a new disk so that you do not have to lose your document just because you haven't got a formatted disk handy.

EDIT menu has the CUT, COPY, PASTE AND DELETE options. Cut is normally used to delete stuff from your document but here delete does that. The cut command removes stuff from the document but holds it in a one cut buffer, then the paste

option lets you place what was just cut in a new spot or back in the same spot if you made a mistake. You can Search for text strings and replace text globally that is all occurrences of a text string will be changed to something else wherever they appear.

Layout menu, here you create columns for a page or a document, Snap to guides are located here as is the snap to grid and even the setting up of the grid that you will have your text snap to. You can insert pages inside your document (that's where you left out a whole page and it belongs between pages 3 and 4 in your 9 page document. You delete pages here and move pages around in your document as you rearrange their order. You also set up the page routing here, especially if you are going to use a non standard routing. You can also kill the text routing scheme that you mistakenly created and here you tell the program to automatically set page numbers where ever you want them.

The View menu is used often as it contains options to view the page as the Full page, The actual size, 50% of actual, 200% of actual, show the full width or set the scale that you want to see your document. There is also a variable zoom feature. You have rulers that go across the top and along the left side and these rulers can be in inches, centimeters, millimeters or picas. You define which measuring system in the Global menu but you control their use in the view menu. The column outline can be delineated on the screen but it will not be printed so you can see exactly where your column boundaries are and this is very useful when you import graphics. Here too is the option to show or not to show your pictures. After you have placed your pictures you should select the not to show because it takes a lot of time to draw the graphics and if they are not shown the rewrite time will be vastly increased. The screen is always being redrawn as you move around the page and across pages so anything that speeds up the redraw time is very welcome.

Global menu allows you to select from among the printer drivers which include
epsonNq
epson Nx

**Hp Laser Or Deskjet Printer
Necp6
Postscript
The Atari Laser**

You can set and save paths to disk drives so that you can have your document files on disk B or C if you have a hard disk. The fonts folder can also be directed to disk B or C if you do not have enough room on disk A. A very nice feature is the ability to set macros that are assigned to the function keys. Here you define what measuring system to use, inches, centimeters, milimeters or picas. Here also you can change the screen colors that you have to look at. You can edit the spelling dictionary and add words to it or delete words but I don't know why you would want to do that.

BEWARE THE PAGESTREAM PROGRAM HAS DIFFERENT FONTS FOR THE SCREEN IN EACH OF THE TWO RESOLUTIONS SUPPORTED(HIGH MONO OR MEDIUM COLOR) BUT THE SCREEN FONTS FOR THE MEDIUM COLOR MONITOR IS UNREADABLE IN THE NORMAL 12 POINT FONT SIZE. YOU CAN NOT CORRECT YOUR TYPOS UNLESS YOU PUMP IT UP TO 200% .

THE MONO MONITOR HAS NO PROBLEM WITH SCREEN READABILITY EVEN AT THE 3 POINT SIZE.

This can be done but I recomend that you use the Pagestream with your mono monitor if you have one or get one for this program as it will drive you nuts trying to switch up to 200% for corrections and down to the full page for layout. You can actually show two full pages on the screen but at that degree of shrinking nothing is readable but the overall aspect of the document can be viewed.

There are still some bugs in the current program. I bombed out with two bombs when I used the quit option from the file menu and I had to shift out of some of the view modes several times before it took, it was necessary to go from text to global modes and then back

to text to cancel a view mode such as double underlining. A last word of caution The Pagestream program costs \$200.00 and probably can be bought for \$160.00 at standard discount. At this price you will not be happy using it with the color monitor and if you will not spring for the momo monitor just for this program I suggest that you purchase the original Desktop Publishing called Publishing Partner which can be had for \$50.00 or the Timeworks version for about \$120.00.

Pagestream comes on three single sided disks and will run on a 520 ST if gem is in Roms.

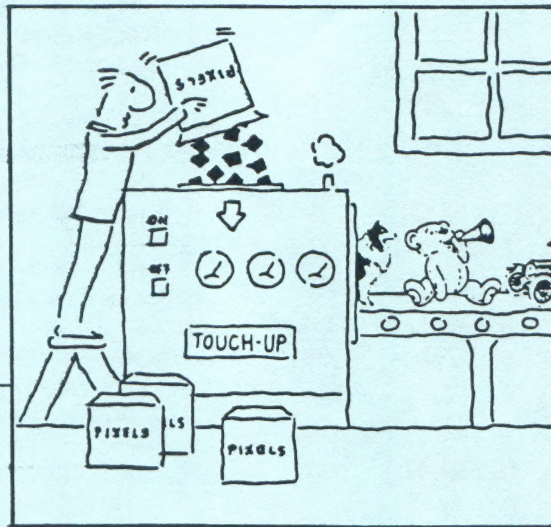
There is more to Pagestream than I have outlined in this review. It appears to be an excelent program for Desktop Publishing and the bugs are so far minimal. The manual is nicely written but fall short in the area of using the spelling checker and hyphenation controls. The use of this important feature is omitted and if you do use Pagestream with the color monitor you will definitely need the spell checker.

As is usual with bit mapped output the printing of your document will take about 15 minutes per page so have lots of other things to do when printing out anything. The other disadvantage is the lack of support for the .TNY format for graphic icons, This format is very common and was supported by the original program Publishing Partner. Our JACG library has many disks of .TNY format pictures that now have to be converted to DEGAS format to be used by Pagestream.

Eric Jacoves JACG

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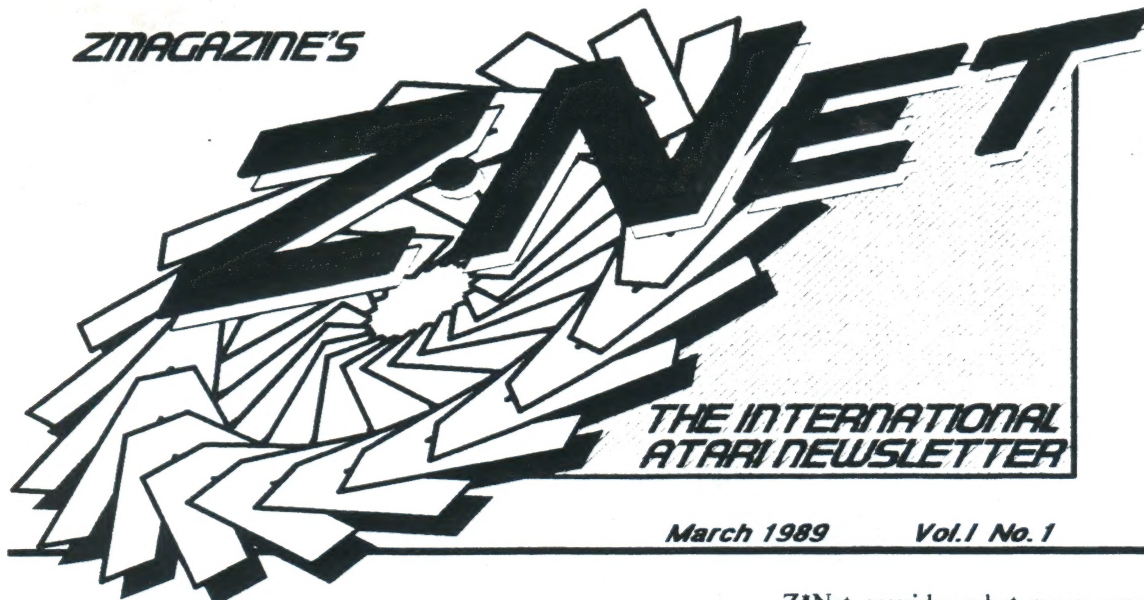
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ZMAGAZINE'S



This Issue:

Z*Net
NewsWire

ST Xformer
Update

DOS XE

UltraScript

NAMM 89

March 1989

Vol.1 No.1

PREMIER ISSUE

WHAT IS Z*NET?

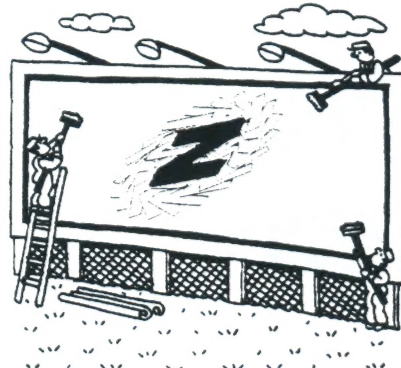
by Ron Kovacs

Z*Net is NOT:

- A) Slavic for "just say no" (znyet).
- B) A fruit-fly (gnat).
- C) An epidermal eruption (zit).

Z*Net is:

- A) An International news supplement for Atari User Groups worldwide.
- B) An open communication forum.
- C) Brokered advertising to support Atari User Group newsletters.



Z*Net is a totally new concept in ATARI news distribution. The Z*Net idea was born after years of discussion and user group inquiries about reprinting information from ZMagazine, my weekly online publication devoted to Atari 8 Bit news and reviews. Along with ZMag is STZMag, which covers the ST side of Atari. These publications are available on the pay telecommunication services such as CompuServe and GENie, and over 300 bulletin board systems around the world. As we start our 4th year of online publishing, we premiere Z*Net.

Z*Net provides what many newsletter editors have been crying for: *material!* We have current news and articles from respected writers in the Atari community. Already committed to write original material for Z*Net are Ron Luks, Darek Mihocka, Darlah Pine, Matthew Ratcliff, Alan Reeve, David Small, and many others including our own staff. Best of all, Sig Hartmann has pledged Atari's support and a continuing column in Z*Net! Of course, we encourage contributions from our readers and participating groups.

The advertising money generated by this insert actually goes to the user groups that include Z*Net in their newsletter! The combined buying potential of thousands of user group members makes Z*Net ad sales much easier than individual efforts, and much easier on both the groups and the advertisers.

If you are one of the fortunate Atari Club members reading this introductory editorial, you are a member of one of our limited debut groups. As we grow and develop, we will bring you the best publishing yet offered to the ATARI community. If you are an advertiser or are reading this through a newsletter exchange and want more information, please contact John Nagy at (201) 968-8148, or send email via CompuServe 71777,2140, or GENie at address ZMAGAZINE. We expect to add hundreds of user groups to the Z*Net family in the coming year.

So, sit back and enjoy reading our first Z*Net. And PLEASE comment! Also debuting shortly will be our new Z*Net area on GENie. Next month we will give you more details on this area, and provide you with information on signing up to all of the telecommunication services.

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PRODUCTION Bruce Hansford
ADVERTISING John Nagy

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GENie..... ZMAGAZINE
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Coming Soon



☞ Atari will be part of a 150 show shopping mall presentation of a mini auto show sponsored by Mitsubishi. The "Eclipse", a new entry to the US car market, will be presented at each of the shows with the ATARI ST providing the statistics of the auto (as well as it's own powers of Desktop Publishing!). This will be many people's first look at BOTH products. A contest will be part of the shows, with STs as prizes. Look to your local shopping mall later this year!

☞ SIG HARTMAN told us that he would be taking software from American developers to the Hanover Fair in Germany. His objective is to expand the marketing of American software overseas, which in turn will assist a future push of ST machines in the United States. Next month we will update you here! While you are reading this, the Hanover Computer Fair is about to start. There will be many reports on the pay services and in our online publications. Rumors of the 68030 and software abound! Tune in to ST*ZMAG for the latest news.

☞ DOS XE for the XL and XE computers has been released and you should be aware that Atari will allow you to make a copy of the disk, but you CANNOT make a copy of the manual. Copying of the disk does NOT include transferring on a BBS system. This is strictly forbidden by Atari. If you are interested in DOS XE, send \$13.50 to Atari Corp. Read on for a review in this issue.

☞ Keith Ledbetter, the author of the public domain terminal programs called EXPRESS, is planning a June release of 8-bit

EXPRESS in cartridge form. Features of this new software release include windows, online buffer, several transfer protocols including ymodem-batch. Pricing will debut at \$69.95. Pre-orders are being accepted. Orion Systems, 2211 Planters Row Drive, Midlothian, Virginia 23113.

☞ The 1989 VICOM 89 Visual Communications Trade Show and Conference will be held April 6-9 at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Center in Toronto, Canada. 416-535-4484.

☞ The 1989 National Computer Graphics Association trade show and convention will be held April 17-20, at the Philadelphia Convention Center in Philadelphia, PA. 703-698-9600

☞ ST-World Magazine recently announced the World Of Atari shows. The first two of many to come will be April 22-23 at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California, and June 24-25, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dearborn, Michigan. According to Rich Tsukiji, the publisher of ST World, Atari Corp. will be supporting these shows "110 percent". Atari game machines, 8-bit systems, ST and Mega systems, seminars, and workshops. 503-673-2259.

☞ Word has it that the new PC-Ditto II, the hardware IBM PC emulator from Avant-Garde, and the new GCR, Gadgets by Small's modernized version of the Translator One, may be introduced at the World of Atari show in Anaheim. Sounds like these shows are going to be winners!

☞ CompuServe continues it's \$15.00 free online time offer. If you are not a subscriber and would like to

get online, send your name and address to Syndicate Publishing, PO Box 74, Middlesex, NJ 08846. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

☞ The good folk at Practical Solutions have a limited time offer. If you purchased a Video Key, their RGB to color composite converter for the ST, between Dec 15, 1988 and Mar 15, 1989, then you are about to be pleasantly surprised! Practical Solutions will send you who qualify a FREE gift! You will be allowed to select one item from their "Master Series" of products and receive it at no charge. The "Master Series" includes: Mouse Master: A Mouse/Joystick Port Controller for the ST and Amiga. Monitor Master: Monitor Switchbox for the ST. Drive Master: Floppy Disk Drive Switchbox for the ST. Just cut the "Golden Key" emblem from the front of your Videokey box, send it in with proof-of-purchase, and their discount coupon, and they will return your gift by return mail. If you don't have this coupon, you can obtain by it calling Practical Solutions at 602-884-9612. This rebate offer must be postmarked by Mar 30, 1989.

☞ Several new promotional specials from Atari are in the making. Details have not been released as of press time, but it appears that one is aimed at current Atari 8-bit users. Coupons worth \$150 will be mailed to user groups for use by members with 8-bit machines toward the purchase of a 1040ST. Another promotion will be with the introduction of the Ultra-script Postscript SLM804 laser printer for around \$1500. A third promotion

will be aimed at user groups.... something about a half-price deal for STs.

☞ XANTH Software of Seattle is nearly through developing MIDI-Maze for the 8-bit Atari. This single or multi-player game can link 16 players in a maze shoot-em-up that has been an ST favorite for a couple of years. The new 8-bit version will allow ST and 8-bit computers to play this game in any combination, a big boon to tournament fanatics. It should be available this summer.

☞ A hot new video digitizer called VID-ST from Scotland, is going to be imported by Computer Game Plus, in Orange, CA, 714-639-8189. It looks excellent, and offers some features (like animation on a 520ST) that are outstanding! Plugs into the cartridge port. Check it out!! Price is not set.

☞ Phreaker Caught: ZMAG readers may remember "Ellwood" (not his real name), a Flint, MI BBS operator who accused ST-Report editor Ralph Mariano of piracy in a conference on CompuServe last fall. State Police raided 19 year old Elwood's home in January and confiscated \$8000 worth of computer equipment that they claim Elwood used to illegally charge phone calls all over the world. Logs indicate 24 hour/day connections to Germany and other locations using "hacked" credit cards. Further warrants were sought to search for pirate software. Ellwood's name is being withheld by officials "pending charging", which may mean they won't charge him at all if he turns evidence on the credit card and piracy ring.

In the past year Atari has begun to deliver on some of its promises. There seems to be a new life for the XL and XE computers, thanks to the XEGS (XE Game System). Atari claims that its game systems (2600, 7800, XEGS) now garner one fifth of the hot video game system market, dominated by Nintendo and Sega. The tide may be turning in the favor of Atari as it brings more software to market.

Atari has released 15 or more new cartridges (though not nearly so many new PROGRAMS) over the last year. First, let's take a look at some of the more important "reruns".

Accolade has licensed "Ace of Aces", "Fight Night", and "Hardball" for Atari cartridges. "Hardball" is an excellent baseball simulation, best suited for two players. "Fight Night" is a fair boxing simulation. The graphics are very well done, but the joystick responses are annoyingly slow. "Ace of Aces" is a WWII simulation of an RAF Mosquito on several dog fighting and bombing missions. Nearly ALL of Accolade's newer offerings are available for the Commodore 64, so porting to the Atari XL/XE/XEGS is a moot point once the profitability issue is settled.

Lucasfilm Games has licensed "Ballblazer", "Rescue on Fractalus", "Escape from Edilon", and "Koronis Rift" into Atari's cartridges. "Ballblazer" is a superb 3d simulation, akin to a puck's eye view of 'one-on one' ice hockey. It's remarkably fast and playable, with hypnotic graphics and sound effects. "Rescue on Fractalus" places you in a lunar lander of sorts. Your mission is to pick up some stranded colleagues, and blast some bad guys from the mountain tops. The Lucasfilm Games were marketed in disk form by Epyx, until Atari bought up the rights to put them on cartridges.

Recently Epyx won a lawsuit over "World Karate Championship". The suit claimed that the "look and feel" of the game violated the copyrights on the popular arcade game "World Karate Champ". The Atari 8bit version of this game was superb, but the product was pulled from the shelves only a few weeks after its release, due to this suit. This is an ideal candidate for a new Atari cartridge. It would require little or no additional development on the part of Epyx, and would bring a virtually ALL NEW game to 8bit Atarians. If Atari can add Epyx to their license list, this would be a MAJOR BOOST to the software base for the 8bit Atari line.

MicroProse has dropped us entirely. CEO Bill Stealy has referred to 8bit Atarians as some of the worst pirates

RATTY'S RAP

by Matthew Ratcliff
Mat**Rat*
Ratware Softworks

ever. However, his "F-15 Strike Eagle" belongs in an Atari cartridge; it's light years ahead of "Ace of Aces". We need some of the newer games like "Gunship" or "Project Stealth Fighter". This is one fence Atarians (or Atari Corp.) need to mend. If Microprose can be convinced that Atari's newest bank switch cartridge technology is virtually pirate proof, and profitable, maybe Mr. Stealy can be turned back to the "Atari SIDE" of the force (of the growing video game industry).

Atari has managed to license "Mario Brothers" from Nintendo. This is a great game, especially for two players. But this game is SIX years old. I fear that, once Atari begins to close ground with Nintendo technologically (in terms of software development), we won't see the likes of "Super Mario Brothers II" ported to the XEGS; Nintendo will simply refuse to license them.

"Battlezone" was the first 3D coin op arcade game. This 3D tank game was a smash hit, 8 or 9 years ago. Atari has licensed "Blue Max" from Broderbund. This is a good WWII simulation circa 1983. You pilot your biplane in dog-fights and bombing missions, flying across a scrolling landscape. Although new cartridges, the software is still very old. "Food Fight" is out on cartridge, which has been described to me simply as "boring" by several sources. I guess it just didn't make the translation from "Animal House", the movie.

What is NEW under the sun FROM ATARI? Recently "Crystal Castles" was released in 8bit cartridge form. Bentley Bear is playing a 3 dimensionalized version of Pac-Man. There are lots more baddies to avoid. The mazes are no longer flat, but are a 3D, 2/3 overhead view. There are elevators, stairs, and tunnels to navigate - some 30 different screens to master. There are special escape routes that allow you to skip levels in the game as well. This game has been around a while for the ST and 2600, but it is rather new. It is very "cutsie" and seems to fascinate young children with good graphics, darling characters, amusing sound effects, and playability at all levels.

"Into The Eagle's Nest" sports a

copyright of 1988. Both Atari and Pandora software share credits on the title screen. This is apparently a contracted development for Atari. We can expect to see more offerings like this in the future, where developers put together a game cartridge for Atari according to their specifications. And Atari's standards have risen to a new level of excellence with "Into The Eagle's Nest".

It is WWII and you have managed to gain entry to the Eagle's Nest, a notorious Nazi fortress. You must shoot your way through, collecting lost treasures, ammo, keys, elevator passes, and more. Each level is a maze of rooms and corridors. It has finely detailed graphics, and top notch playability! This is an EXTREMELY addictive game. It is similar to Gauntlet from Mindscape, but faster and more playable in my opinion - though slightly less sophisticated. But this makes "Into The Eagle's Nest" easier to master game play mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on the ADVENTURE of it all. It is definitely a GOOD SIGN of things to come from Atari.

From this overview of 8bit products from Atari it is clear that the 8bit Atari is certainly NOT DEAD. Not by a long shot. If Atari could sign on Mindscape, Microprose, Epyx, and Electronic Arts for multiple conversions to cartridges we would see a resurgence of the 8bit Atari machines of mind boggling proportions. In all of this it is CLEAR that no new productivity software is available from Atari, nor any of the big name software companies.

If you want more support for your 8bit write to Atari and ask for it. Ask them to court the likes of Microprose and EA. Tell them what HOT games currently playing on the Commodore/64 that you would gladly BUY in cartridge form for your Atari XL, XE, or XEGS. Send those cards and letters to: Atari Corp., Attn: Sig Hartmann, 1196 Borregas, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

It might not help much, but it certainly couldn't hurt. Atari is making steps in the right direction. That seems clear from some of the newest games. They are getting more original, playable, and graphically spectacular. Show Atari what you want (list specific titles and software companies) and where you want it (Atari computer dealers, department stores that carry Commodore software, etc.). Be specific. It might not hurt to mention how much money you've spent on software in the last year, how much you use your Atari, and how many Atari computers you've helped sell over the years!



ST XFORMER UPDATE

by Darek Mihocka Copyright © 1989



About 3 years ago, as a new ST owner, I felt a need for this new machine to support its predecessor, the Atari 800. Although far from being a good programmer, I decided it was a task that could be accomplished and set out to do it. Having just started university, I felt it would be a good learning experience, and even if it didn't work, it would be time well spent, considering my major is in computer engineering.

A few people here in the Toronto area may remember the user group meeting where I first brought up the subject, to a mixed reaction from the other members. Six months later, the first working version of the Atari 800 emulator was showing the familiar READY prompt. Although it was very crippled and slow, the fact that I got this far motivated me to continue working on this project and develop it into a useful piece of software.

One year ago at this time, I released ST Xformer 1.2, the first version of the Xformer emulator that worked on both color and monochrome STs. At that time I also announced that ST Xformer II (a.k.a. ST Xformer 2.0) was under development and would be available later that year. Since then, I have been active on the telecommunication services like Compuserve and Genie, providing users of the emulator with files and documentation, and gathering ideas for future version of the emulator.

ST Xformer II was released in July, with many new features, including a doubling of the emulation speed and support for almost all DOSes. A month later, Xformer 2.1 added some missing features, like support for double density and the 800XL memory.

A separate version, called ST Xformer II Junior, was provided for 520ST users. It had a subset of features, providing only Atari 800 emulation with one virtual disk drive.

In September I developed the cable which allows the ST to talk to 8-bit peripherals. This was accompanied by two new versions of the emulator, 2.2 and 2.2 Junior.

In November I unveiled Xformer 2.3 at the Atari show, which fix a few bugs.

Since then I have also developed two related programs, the Quick Transfer Utility, and the File Xfer Program. These allow you to perform disk and file transfers between the 5.25" disks and ST.

Two features that I would like to add soon are emulation of the R-Time8 real time clock cartridge, and support for 80 columns. At this time I don't have either piece of hardware, nor do I know exactly what software uses them, so I'd appreciate hearing from people who do have the clock cartridge or the 80 column card. I know that SpartaDOS uses the clock cartridge for date stamping its files, but I'm not sure exactly what supports the 80 column card.

In one year I will graduate, and will be seeking full-time employment. Programming on the Atari 400 and then the ST was a great way to make some money while going to school and have fun and learn at the same time. But now I have to think of a career, either in Atari programming or in the MSDOS/OS2 world. Having had the luxury of being in a co-op engineering program, I have worked at several major

computer companies in Canada and the US, and there is no doubt in my mind that the future of personal computing lies in the IBM world. Better hardware, better software, better developers, and of course, there is a much larger user base.

I have one more co-op term this fall, followed by a winter at school, and then I am anticipating a permanent move to the U.S. to start a permanent job. Just in case that plan falls through, I will be looking for a full time job (loud hint hint).

But, all of this won't start for at least another 6 months, which gives me lots of time to add more features to Xformer, minus the code compiler. And after I am settled down and working, I will definitely plug the ST back in again.

Speaking of things to plug in, the Xformer serial cables can now be ordered in the U.S. from Innovative Concepts. The price is \$19.95 (5 cents cheaper than buying it from me), and if you live in the States, it will arrive a lot quicker than from me. Of course, you can still order the cables from me if you live outside of the U.S. You will still have to get the software from me, but with less cables to build, test, and ship, I'll be able to process the disks much faster.

You can call Innovative Concepts in Michigan at (313)-293-0730. They can be reached on Compuserve at 76004,1764.

A few months ago, two bulletin boards started supporting the ST Xformer. I uploaded the latest versions of the Xformer to those boards, along with many .SD files for use with it. With the direct file access feature of the XE emulator, those .SD files will no longer be as critical for using the emulator.

"I AM ANTICIPATING A PERMANENT MOVE TO THE U.S."

I'd like to finish off this rather lengthy article (or should I say rambling) by again asking people to show Xformer to their fellow ST users. I'm disappointed by the fact that some ST magazines have decided to not review it, even though I sent them the whole package. I've heard excuses ranging from "We heard you had a new version, so we won't bother with this one", to "we'll wait until you have it running at full speed since this one isn't really useful", to not even getting a reply. Ironically, COMPUTE magazine, of which I was a faithful reader, was ridiculing the thought of an 8-bit emulator.

Fortunately other magazines have reviewed it, or have indicated that they are currently in the process of reviewing it, and will publish them in the near future. Perhaps the XE emulator will convince the skeptics that there is a place for this product. I recommend to anyone interested to check out the last few issues of Computer Shopper magazine since they've been following Xformer closely over the last few months.

Th-th-th-th-that's all folks!

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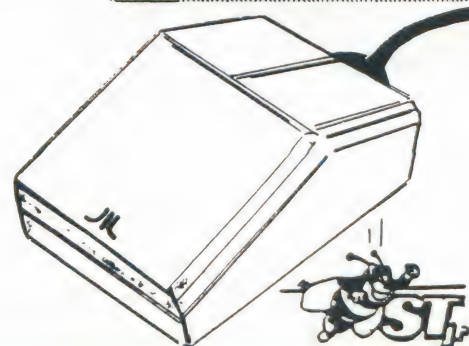
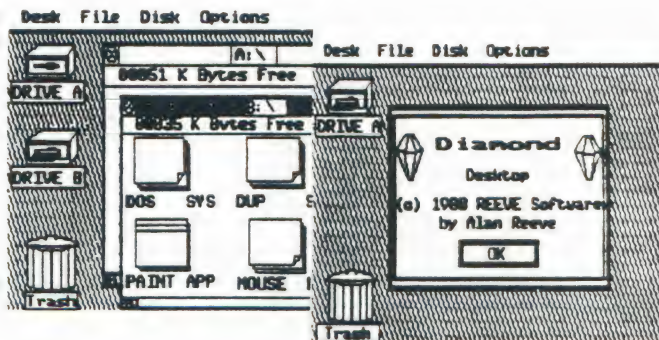
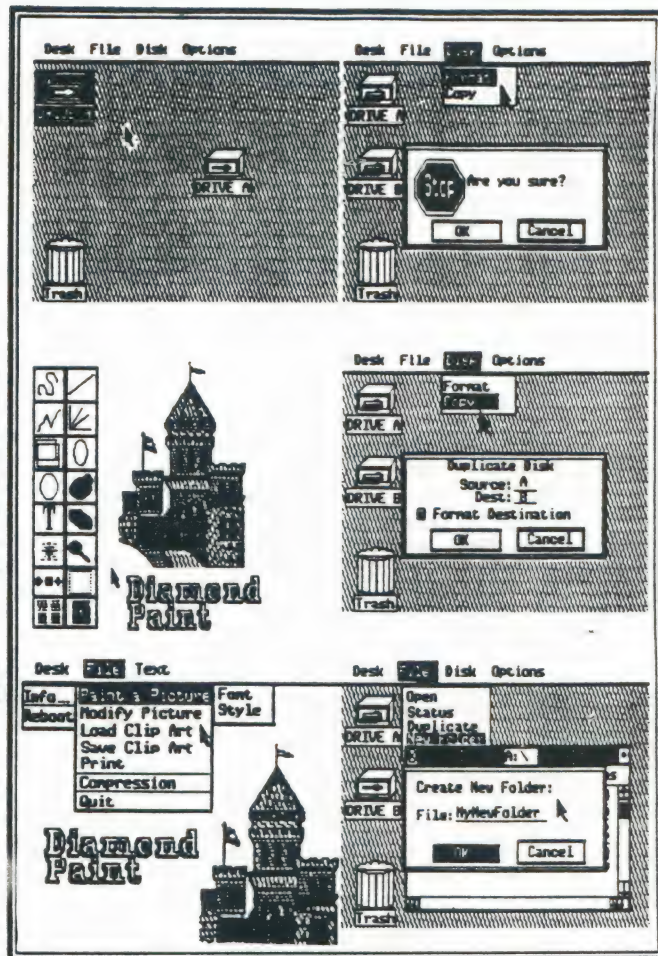
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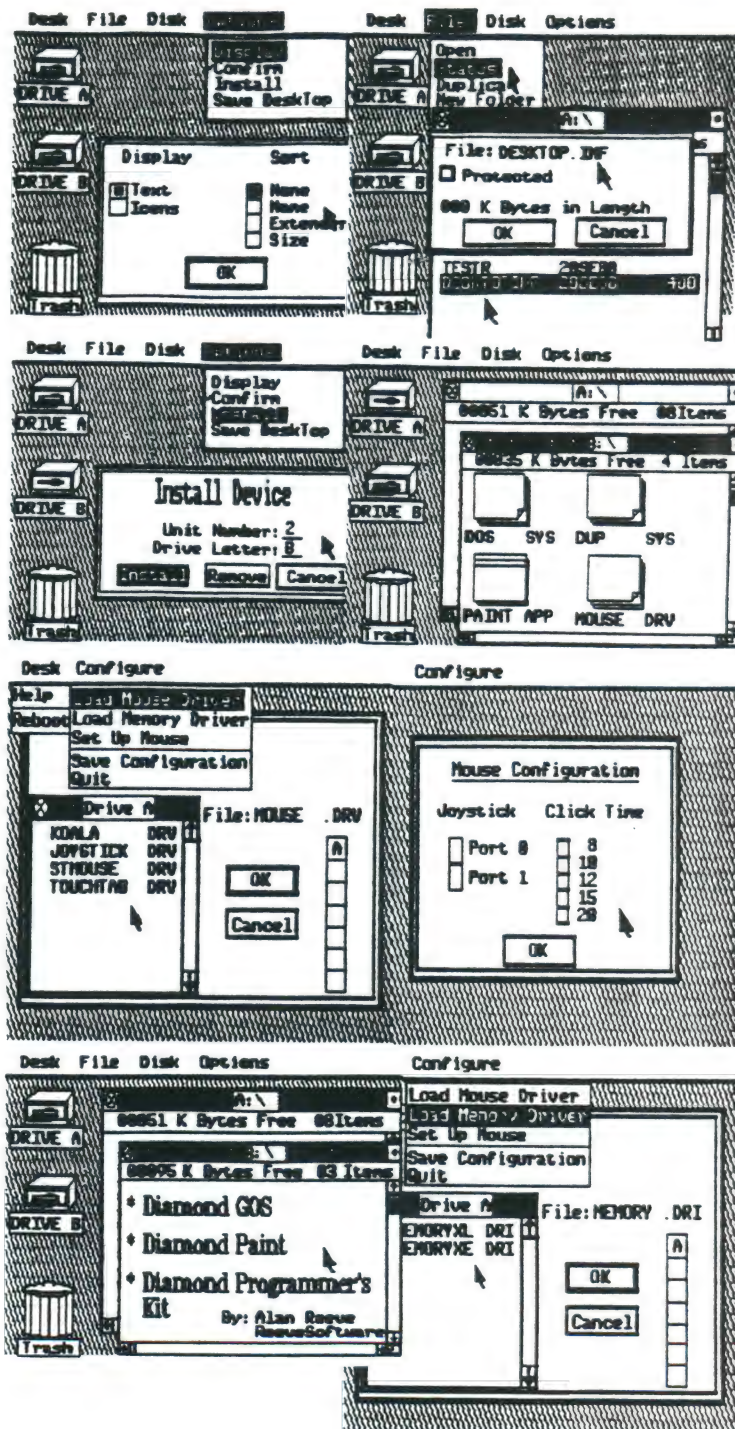
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DIAMOND GOS

Super Cartridge

The Winter 1989 NAMM Show (National Association of Music Merchandisers) was held at the Anaheim Convention Center from January 19-22. This is the second straight year that Atari has had a display at the NAMM show, and this year's booth was much bigger than last years. In a style similar to the Comdex show, Atari had six stations set up in their booth, with various developers taking turns showing their wares. The booths all had Atari Mega 4 CPUs, with Megafile 30 hard drives, and there was also two Atari SLM804 Laser printers. In addition, many developers had their own booths this year, and had their products up and running on all manners of Atari ST's, from 520STFMs, to Mega 4's. Companies taking turns in the Atari Booth included Dippy Tek, showing a desk accessory for use with the Southworth Jambox (Jam Box D/A ST), Johnsware showing the MIDI Boss, MSBehave, and other products, and Thinkware, showing Take Note, a training program. Companies with their own booths included Hybrid Arts, Sonus, Dr. T's, Steinberg, Digi Designs/C-Labs, MIDI Mouse, & Aesthetic Engineering (Music Mouse) and J.L. Cooper. Atari executives at the show included Sam and Leonard Tramiel, Augie Ligouri (VP of Operations) & Frank Foster (Director of Specialty Markets).

The big announcement from Atari this year came from a new developer for the Atari Line, Jimmy Hotz of Hotz Instrument Technology Systems (H.I.T.S.) The Hotz Box, as the product is called, drew large crowds whenever it was demonstrated. The product was demonstrated by Jimmy Hotz, and Mick Fleetwood of the rock group Fleetwood Mac. The press release announcing the product said, "The Hotz MIDI Translator presents to its wide range of players a flexible, musical palette that contains all of the correct musical choices at a given point, allowing it's users the ability to create music without any formal training. 'The HOTZ MIDI TRANSLATOR responds to touch, dynamics and vibrato with subtlety unavailable from conventional keyboard, with no moving parts, a greater speed of playing, greatly increased touch sensitivity and optimized placements and spacing of keys' says Hotz, creator of the instrument and after whom the product is named."

Mick Fleetwood, the Chairman of the Board of HITS, said "The debut of the Hotz MIDI Translator working in conjunction with the Atari ST is an exciting advancement in music and computer technology. The strides which we and Atari are making with the release of this product represents a quantum leap forward in both human and computer control of music concepts." The Hotz MIDI Translator will be available in various configurations from the high end professional studio market, to a model suited to anyone who enjoys music."

The Hotz Box as shown at the NAMM show was powered in part by four Mega 4 computers, and had three keyboard-like setups. I say keyboard-like because while the outline of keys were on the boards, they do not have the traditional piano style keys that are depressed. Rather the surface of the instrument is covered with a touch sensitive material. Sections of the keyboard were labeled according to the instrument sounds that were on that bank. When the system was being demonstrated, Hotz would play digitized sections of popular music, "Control" by Janet Jackson, and "Seven Wonders" by Fleetwood Mac. He and Mick Fleet-

NAMM 89 REPORT

*By Robert Brodie
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wood would play along with the recording. Bear in mind that Mick Fleetwood is a drummer, and cannot play any other instrument. To dramatically prove the ease of use with this product, Hotz would then select a person at random from the audience, and allow them to come up and play along...and all of it sounded great!!! The most any of the participants needed was about thirty seconds to a minute of instruction to play well!!

Famous rock and pop stars like the Pointer Sisters, the Moody Blues' Mike Pinder, YES, and many more provided extra interest in the Atari display, performing and mingling with the

crowds. Thomas Dolby also performed an invitation-only concert sponsored by Atari for about 3000 guests on Saturday night. Other stars drifting through the NAMM show included Donny Osmand, Brian Wilson, and countless other music makers. Atari logged over 250 applications for dealer information.

Sonus announced the addition of three new products to it's line. It expanded it's line of MIDI routing and synch devices with the I2 MIDI merger and routing system. The systems features 2 in / 8 out. Sonus also announced a distribution agreement with Command Development for D-50 Command, and M1-Command. These products offer powerful graphic editing and librarian functions as well as a revolutionary voice creation process.

One of the more unusual events of this NAMM show was a demonstration of the various scoring programs, side by side. Dr. T's "The Copyist" was the entry for the Atari line, which saw MacIntosh and IBM products demonstrated side by side with it. Dr. T's is also trying out UltraScript, the postscript clone by Imagen, for use with its scoring programs. The results were impressive indeed! Output from a Mega 4 to an Atari SLM-804 in three to four minutes, then an easy six pages per minute! It was an entertaining, and interesting demonstration. The Mac entry was furiously scribbling notes about "The Copyist", and saying among themselves "That's really neat! WE should be doing some of this stuff!!!"

Atari was assisted in the booth by local users groups from Southern California, including: HACKS (Hooked on Atari Computer Keyboard Society, North Hollywood), ACAOC (Atari Computer Association of Orange County), and ACES (Atari Computer Enthusiast Society, San Gabriel Valley). The groups staffed an ongoing demonstration of Spectre 128, proving to Mac users that they could switch to an ST for MIDI, and still run their business with the Mac programs they were familiar with. They also handled many inquiries about local Atari dealers for musicians, as well as directed the many inquiries about becoming an Atari dealer to Wayne Smith, Atari's Southern California Marketing Director.

As a closing note: last year we moved a lot of ST's into various vendors booths. Often, it seemed as if they were just trying to get their feet wet with the ST. This year, I could not help but notice that there were ST's all over the entire show floor, but they belonged to the developers!! Atari doesn't have to apologize for their showing in the MIDI market. They have developed into the clear leader. As we were finishing up with the tear down after the show I asked Frank Foster of Atari what his impressions of this show were. "In the future, as we look back at this show, we will realize that it was the first major step in realizing Sam's dream of Atari taking its proper place in the US market."

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BEYOND GEM!

by Douglas Hodson

Welcome to the first column of "Beyond GEM". This column, written exclusively for Z*Net, is intended for ST developers who are already fairly well versed in GEM programming. The column is intended to cover a WIDE range of programming topics. The language of choice is 'C' (of course), although most techniques can be easily extended to several other languages as well.

How does the column differ from all those "other" GEM tutorials? There are a vast number of GEM tutorials out in the market these days. After a "literature search", I found so many, I gave up trying to track them all down. So the question still remains "How does this column differ?". After my search it was also quite evident that most GEM tutorials were repeats of each other (no offense authors). Very little extra information presented that's not already contained in any good GEM programming book. Not much in the way of ST specific routines such as the ones contained in the BIOS (Basic Input Output System). Don't get me wrong, I am NOT excluding discussions of GEM by any means. In fact many of the GEM routines that are brushed over in books deserve entire columns for a complete discussion. Remember `evnt_multi()`, this routine requires 23 parameters for its operation! I'll place bets 95% of the ST programmers simply copied source code out of some book for its use (as I did).

What's the bottom line? Each column will be short and sweet. Something each month to highlight ST programming. So lets cover the guts of the ST, but not to the point of the boring techie stuff. Developers of any computer know this feeling: "study the computer you're going to program until the computer is no longer on the market to program"! Lets discuss important stuff that gets things done! Until next month.

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Next Month in Z*Net

ATARI CORP's Own Column!

Beyond GEM

User Group Hints

And MORE GREAT STUFF!

DOS XE

FOR THE XL AND XE COMPUTERS AND THE XF551 DRIVE

Reviewed by Tom Curtner

DOS XE is the new DOS released by Atari Corporation for the XF551 Disk Drive, and the XL and XE computer systems. This DOS was configured to work with the special features of the XF Drive. The XF's main feature, of course, is being a Double Density, Double sided drive. When the drives were first shipped, DOS 2.5 was the issued DOS. However DOS 2.5 would not access the full capabilities of the XF. Some owners were forced to use their old standby, SPARTA DOS. Now, with DOS XE they have a choice. Let's see what that means to you and me.

With DOS XE you receive a 135 page manual, and one disk. Take time to read the manual before attempting to do any serious work. DOS XE offers much more than your previous Atari DOS', and if you choose to use the DOS, you'll need to know how to utilize all options.

The first of DOS XE's new features is the ability to configure DOS XE to your drive system. By loading the file SETUP.COM you can configure DOS XE to run an AUTORUN.SYS, set up your drive system (number of drives and device numbers) and buffers, and configure DOS XE to the type of drive you'll be using. The drive types available are 810, 1050, XF551, 130XE Ramdisk, and SS/DD (single sided, double density such as Indus GT). After making your choice, you return to the menus and can then write DOS XE to your disk.

A very important change has come about with the advent of the XF551 drive being DS/DD: the fact that DOS XE addresses all disks in 256 byte sectors. How is this possible on drives with only 128 bytes per sector? DOS XE reads and writes sectors in pairs! Hence you can simulate having 256 bytes per sector. SPECIAL NOTE: DOS XE uses Kilobytes in referring to file and disk space available. Here the manual states that 1 Kilobyte = 1000 Bytes. When calling up the directory you will see (x)amount of K Bytes free.

DOS XE allows the use of COMMAND LINES (limited to 80 characters), which gives you the option of performing several functions. You can move between menus. (Example: S S 02FB89;. F >RETURN < * here we go to SYSTEM MENU, select SET DATE option, set our date to 02 FEB 89, then to MAIN, and finally to FILE MENU) COMMAND LINE rules are: SPACE or a GROUP of SPACES are treated as RETURNS, A PERIOD always takes you to the MAIN MENU, a SEMICOLON answers the remaining prompts with RETURNS, SPACES adjacent to a SEMICOLON are IGNORED, SPACES adjacent to a RETURN are IGNORED, and a SEMICOLON followed by a RETURN is treated as a SEMICOLON ALONE.

PATHNAMES are now used in Atari DOS. Here you give the direction or "PATH" which DOS must follow to access the file you want, such as: D> or A>LETTERS. However PATHNAMES are limited to 80 characters, which limits the amount of subdirectories you may have. So don't get too carried away. In conjunction with PATHNAMES you also have the option of using the "WORKING DIRECTORY" to shorten long PATHNAMES. If your working directory was "LETTERS" YOU could use "A:REVIEWS". Since the colon is the working directory's pathname, is

translates thus: "A>LETTERS>REVIEWS".

If you don't know where the START, SELECT, and ESCAPE KEYS are on your machine, you will now! DOS XE uses the START KEY to continue commands and to return you from system errors. The SELECT KEY is used in conjunction with the START. If you are prompted to START TO CONTINUE, the SELECT will give you the choice of aborting. ESCAPE is just that! During normal operations the ESCAPE will spirit you away from the area you were in. If you're not using command lines, you'll probably be pressing the ESCAPE key to exit to the other menus. From now on, START and ESCAPE are your two main keys.

BATCH FILES can now be run as "AUTO-RUN.BAT". So when you boot up, DOS XE will run this file first, unless you have an "AUTO-RUN.SYS", which takes precedence. BATCH FILES are COMMAND LINES saved as text. BATCH FILES are also limited to 511 bytes.

With DOS XE you have four menu's to work with. The MAIN menu is your path to the three other menu's. In Main you see: FILE ACCESS MENU, MACHINE LANGUAGE MENU, SYSTEM FUNCTION MENU, and EXIT TO CARTRIDGE or EXIT TO BASIC. Once in the FILE menu you have these options: FILES LISTING, PROTECT FILES, UNPROTECT FILES, ERASE FILES, RENAME FILES, VIEW A FILE, WORKING DIRECTORY, NEW DIRECTORY, DELETE DIRECTORY, COPY FILES, APPEND A FILE, and INITIALIZE DISK.

DOS XE SYSTEM FUNCTION MENU is your last menu to view. Here you see: FILES LISTING, WORKING DIRECTORY, RUN A BATCH FILE, SET CURRENT DATE, INITIALIZE DISK, CREATE DOSXE.SYS FILE (write DOS), DUPLICATE A DISK, and ALLOW DOS2.X ACCESS. FILES LISTING and WORKING DIRECTORY are common to all three menus. Working between menus and accessing the different options should enable you to perform any task you desire.

I didn't have any luck in reading DOS XE with SPARTA DOS 3.2d, and Atari DOS, or MYDOS. More than likely this is because of the way DOS XE reads and writes to the disk. To me, this is a serious drawback. I like DOS 2.5, and many times use SPARTA DOS to read my Atari DOS disks. I even format my disks from SPARTA DOS with a menu which initializes disks in Atari format (faster!).

If you use Copy Mate 4.3, or MYCopy R, you're in luck. These programs did copy DOS XE disks. Copy Mate started slow, but picked up speed after the initial reading. MyCopy R was slow in all aspects. It's good to know that you can use these programs, since DOS can be pretty slow in copying entire disks.

In summation, I feel DOS XE is a powerful DOS with decent features. If you're unsatisfied with your present DOS but feel the need for a more comprehensive DOS, then by all means consider this one. I must, however, state one fact. Atari DOS 2, 2.5, and Sparta DOS are reliable DOS' and, along with others, have born the brunt of user labor for many years. To abandon them too quickly would be foolhardy.



POSTSCRIPT QUALITY FOR THE ATARI ST DESKTOP PUBLISHER!

By Warren Kearney

UltraScript, Imagen Corporation, Suggested retail \$229.00

At last, the long awaited UltraScript Postscript emulator from Imagen is available. Most of the Atari community has heard of the UltraScript product and those of us with the SLM804 Laser printer have been waiting with fingers crossed hoping it would be worth the wait. Well folks, it's here. UltraScript will hit the Atari Desktop Publishing community with a bang!

MVACE desktop publishing guru Dick Brice and I have been beta testing UltraScript for about a week now. This has been sort of a tag team beta test. While Dick concentrates on the quality of typography, I have concentrated on the Postscript power graphics. I'm glad Dick had the hard job on this one. While fonts are the mainstay of desktop publishing, the ins and outs of Postscript fonts are new to me.

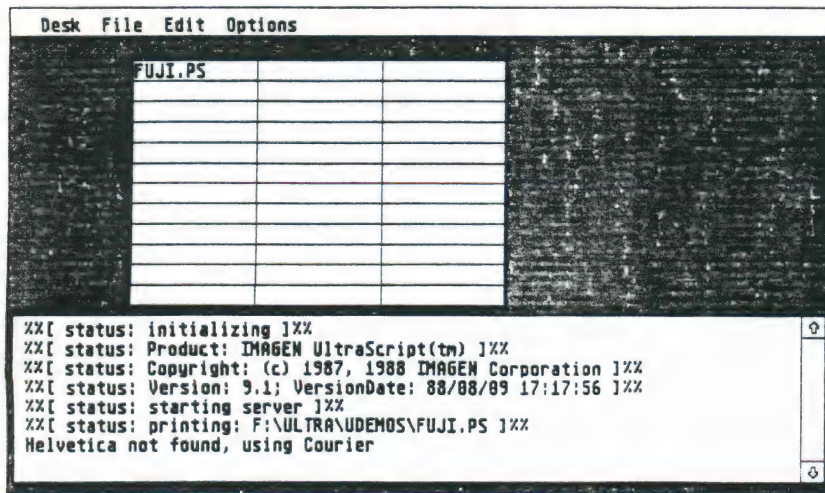
This is just a quick review of UltraScript for this month. I hope to have a more in-depth review in next month's issue. It works! Ok, that was a quick and painless review. Now you can turn to the comics section, sit back, and enjoy your toast.

Ok, Ok, UltraScript does deserve more than that. But, if you think about it, how many programs have you bought that worked out of the box without bombs? No bombs and this is a Beta test copy? (To be fair is version 9.1) Well, so far neither Dick nor I have encounter any real live bugs. If UltraScript runs into any unknown commands it politely tells you it is flushing to the end of the job and then goes to the next job on the list.

UltraScript uses the GEM outprint conventions, so it will be very familiar to anyone using Easy Draw. UltraScript comes up with a GEM menu bar at the top of the screen, then just below that there are thirty-six slots for file names. Click on add a name and continue till your want list is complete. Click on print then sit back and watch your SLM804 come alive with Postscript magic.

I really mean sit back, relax, find something to read or edit. Postscript is not fast! That's a nice way to say that if you have been used to the speed of Calamus, or PageStream for that matter, you're in for a wait. Be of good cheer however, your patience will be rewarded. This is a must buy for anyone serious about the business of Desktop Publishing. You have to see the output of this Postscript emulation to believe it!

For further discussion, you can contact me via CrossNet on FoReM Net node 281 in the Desktop Publishing message base.



Z*NET welcomes the following Publications and User Groups this month:

ABACUS (Atari Bay Area Computer Users Society), San Francisco, California.

COMPUTAH (A.C.E. of Salt Lake City), Salt Lake City, Utah.

GREAT LAKES ATARI DIGEST (Capitol Hill Atari Owners Society and Genesee Atari Group), Lansing and Flint, Michigan.

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ONLINE UPDATE

In between issues of Z*NET, look to your local BBS and the pay services for ZMAGAZINE and ST*ZMAGAZINE. Both publications offer up to the minute coverage on your 8 and 16-bit computer.

Recent ZMAG issues cover the soon to be released Turbo816 from Dataque, Diamond updates and reviews, modification articles, and various other columns of interest to 8 bit owners. ZMAGAZINE is released every Tuesday and available on CompuServe in the SIG*ATARI area (GO ATARI8), Library 11 (ZMAG), and on GENie (ATARI8) Roundtable, Library 13 (ZMAG).

Recent ST*ZMAGAZINE issues include offers from various ST oriented developers, articles on new public domain releases, ST weekly news updates, conference transcripts, hard disk help, hardware modifications, and many other columns of interest to ST owners. STZMAG is released every Tuesday and is available on CompuServe in the (GO ATARIARTS) area, Library 1, (New Uploads), and on GENie's ST RT in Library 15, User Group Newsletters.

If you are not a reader of these two publications, call the services today! If you are not a pay service subscriber, give us a call at (201) 968-8148. We will let you know which of our over 300 BBS's carries ZMAG in your area. Lastly, if you know of a BBS carrying these magazines, please let us know, we would like to add them to our list.



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SPARTA DDS X

Dave Arlington - JACG

Let me start by saying this is not an easy review to write. Trying to describe everything about the new SpartaDos X cartridge in an article that will fit in this newsletter is like trying to write the Cliff Notes for WAR AND PEACE. But I will give it my best shot.

Let's start with the physical aspects. The new SpartaDos X (hereafter referred to as SDX) comes as a professionally packaged item with a large, easy to read 100+ page manual and a sturdy piggyback type cartridge. Despite the fact the manual was pushed out the door practically at the last minute, it is one of the best manuals I have ever seen for any Atari 8-bit product. Well laid out, with an extensive index, it contains sections for both the novice and experienced user as well as a complete reference guide to all the SDX commands. One thing that I really liked about the manual was the appendices. Unlike some Atari products that ignore incompatibility problems with other software, ICD has included appendices on using SDX with TurboBasic, BASIC XE, MAC/65, and the new Atari XF551 disk drive. That's more than Atari did for users with the new DOSXE. The manual only has a few problems, probably due to the rush to get it out. There are a couple minor typos and the CLS (Clear Screen) command was left out even though it exists in the cartridge.

Now for the cartridge itself. It is like the R-Time 8 cartridge in that you can plug other cartridges like the R-Time 8 or a language into the top of it. The SDX cart works on all Atari 8-bit computers, even the Atari 800 unlike disk-based SpartaDos 3.2. I have a small problem with these piggyback carts. When you plug something into them, it weighs enough to pull a little loose from my 130's cartridge port. I have to use pencils to hold the two carts up to make good contact. In the future it would be nice to see the piggyback carts made like the new Atari game carts with a little ledge in the back.

Besides that little complaint, it really is great to have a Disk Operating System on a cartridge. You do not need to write any DOS files to your disks. This makes disks boot almost instantly. SDX remains compatible with all your old disks as well. SDX boots with every type of disk I've put in the drive. If the disk you want to use is a self-booting commercial program or you want to use the disk-based DOS on the disk, no problem. Either just pull the SDX cart out, or use the COLD command to boot the disk in the drive. I've only found one Electronic Arts program that would not boot with the SDX cart installed. Using the COLD command turns off SDX, so you have to hold down OPTION when hitting return to disable a built-in BASIC.

You can also leave any language carts plugged into the SDX cart. Right now, I am using PaperClip with SDX with my Action! cart plugged into it and am still able to access my full 130XE's memory. With SDX, you can hop into Action! (or BASIC XE or MAC/65, but not LOGO!) and then hop right into built-in BASIC and then go back to Action!. If you have the cartridge memory save features enabled (recommended only with a RAMdisk or MIO) whatever programs you were working on will still be there!

It is really beyond the scope of this review to talk about all the commands featured in the SDX cart. I will try to cover the significant parts. The first thing I noticed was the increased likeness to the MS-DOS operating system used by the IBM PCs and compatibles. What is nice is that this likeness to MS-DOS is not included at any expense to those folks comfortable with the 'old' SpartaDos 3.2. If you have previously used either MS-DOS or SpartaDos 3.2, you will not need much time to become familiar with SDX.

From a language cartridge, the usual IO devices are still available, D:, K:, E:, P: and C:. When in SDX, though, there are a new set of devices. As in the MS-DOS world, E: has become CON:, P: has become PRN:, the RS232 device is COM:, and the SDX cart itself is CAR:. Drive numbers can be referenced by either number (if preceded by a D or DSK) or letter. Drive numbers range from 1 to 9 or A to I. The manual makes these new device names sound more confusing than they really are. You should catch on fairly easily, especially if you have used MS-DOS before. The only confusing case is when you use D: in SDX, since SDX sees that as drive 4 and not the default drive.

Almost all the SpartaDos 3.2 commands are still here. Some have alternate MS-DOS names now to go with their SpartaDos 3.2 names. For instance, you can erase a file with ERASE, DEL, or DELETE. Creating a new subdirectory can be done with CREDIR, MKDIR, or MD. Again, the nice thing about a DOS on cartridge, is that all the commands that used to be external and have to load from disk on SpartaDos 3.2 (for instance, FORMAT, MENU [which now also does what XCOPY did], TD, UNERASE, etc.) all now load from the cartridge instantly and are always available.

In addition to the commands carried over from SpartaDos 3.2, there are some new commands. Two deserve extended discussion. The first is a built-in ARC program. The ARC program that comes on the SDX cart has the most extensive set of options I've ever seen in an 8-bit ARC program. You can look at the files in an ARC file, extract all or some, add to an existing ARC file, 'freshen' files in an ARC, delete files from an ARC, and encrypt the files in an ARC so only people with a certain password can unARC them, among other things. It is compatible with IBM, Atari

8-bit, or ST ARC files as well as 8-bit ALF-crunched files. The only problem I had was with downloaded ARC files that had the last block padded with some fill character. I had to resort to SuperUnARC 2.2 to unARC those files.

The other new command worth extra mention is not really a new command. However the MENU command has been so improved and changed that I consider it a whole new command. When you load MENU (off the ever-present cartridge) it reads all the directories on your disk. It then shows a three window display. In the upper left corner is a display of the logged drive and all its nested directories and sub-directories in a easy to see pictorial display. It looks a lot like X-TREE on the IBM. In the upper right corner is a little window showing total files and bytes used and selected files and how many bytes they take. In the center lower window, all the files in the current directory are displayed.

I always found the old SpartaDos 3.2 menu more trouble than it was worth to use. The new menu is a lot easier to use and combines several functions. You can be in either File mode or Directory mode. In File mode, your cursor is placed in the File window where you can move it to select files. You can tag and untag files for copy and delete functions. With one key, you can tag the whole directory or copy all the tagged files. This is a lot like the old SpartaDos 3.2 XCOPY command. One nice big difference is the fact you know how many bytes all the files you want to copy will take up on the destination disk, something you could only guess at with XCOPY. When deleting more than one file, you will be prompted as to whether you really want to delete them or not. If you only have one disk drive, MENU is the only way to copy disks with one disk drive. However, I think you'll find this new menu system so easy to use that you'll be using it for all multiple file copies.

When you switch to Directory mode, the cursor moves up to the upper left window so you can move up and down through directories like with the files. Anyone who has ever had trouble understanding sub-directories will find the pictorial representation of the directory structure very nice. As you move through the directories, the file window below changes to to display the files in the directory the cursor is on. From here, you can create new directories or delete empty ones. You can also tag whole directories for copy when you switch back to the file menu. All in all, the menu function is a very powerful feature.

SpartaDos 3.2 was billed as the SpartaDos Construction Set. More than any previous version, SDX is THE construction set for a Disk Operating System for your 8-bit. There are many features you can customize in the DOS to your own liking. This can be done by specifying a

file called CONFIG.SYS on your floppies. If you do not supply one, there is a default CONFIG.SYS on the cartridge. Through this CONFIG.SYS file you can specify exactly where in memory SpartaDos will load into your computer, whether or not you will have a RAMdisk installed, what the DOS prompt will look like, and what drives and in what order SDX will look for a command file. Let's talk about that last feature for a moment. In old DOSes, if you typed in a command, it had to be on the default drive or it would not work. This was inconvenient if you were swapping a lot of disks. With CONFIG.SYS, as an example, you can tell SDX to look first on the cartridge, then to the MIO, then to the RAMdisk and finally to the default drive for the command.

Through the CONFIG.SYS file, you can tell SDX about all the hardware goodies you have. SDX supports old ATARI DOS disks, high speed on Happy, Indus, XF551, and Doubler drives, the XEP-80 80 column card, and the R-Time B cartridge. All Indus disk drive owners who were disappointed with SyncroMesh will love hearing their drives popping along at super high speed all the time now. SDX supports practically every possible memory upgrade for the 8-bits including upgraded Atari 800s.

Customizing your DOS doesn't end with the CONFIG.SYS file. SpartaDos has always supported batch files, but now they have been improved with parameter passing and input/output redirection. Batch files, for the uninitiated, are simply text files containing a list of SDX commands that can be executed just as if you were sitting at the keyboard typing them. You can now pass up

to 9 parameters to a batch file making them much more flexible, since the old batch files had all the text hard-coded into them. SDX will look for a file called AUTOEXEC.BAT (it used to be STARTUP.BAT in SpartaDos 3.2) upon booting and execute it if it is there. With the new POKE commands, you can use the AUTOEXEC.BAT files to change screen colors, margins, key repeat rate, and much more.

One thing old-time SpartaDos 3.2 users will not be able to do with SDX files is include lines like:

```
CAR
RUN "D:PROGRAM.BAS
```

The text lines in a SDX batch file can only be SDX commands. You cannot directly feed text lines to a language with a batch command. However you can feed text lines to a language with a brand new feature called input/output redirection. Users of systems like MS-DOS and UNIX will be familiar with this feature. It allows you to change the standard input and output devices. Normally standard input comes from the keyboard and standard output goes to the screen. With redirection you can use text

files as default input or send output to some other device like the printer. This feature could lead to some very intriguing possibilities that I don't have the room to go into here.

Well, that's it for a 'capsule' look at SpartaDos X. There is much, much more that could be said. The important thing to say though, I think, is that for the last year or so, all I have heard from most 8-bit users is how no one is releasing new significant software for their machines. Well, this is about as significant as you can get. The new SpartaDos X cartridge gives Atari 8-bit owners power and flexibility that was never imagined when the first machines rolled off the lines with DOS 2.0. Sure, desktop operating systems are nice to look at, but MS-DOS got it's reputation for what it could do, not how it looked and felt. Now finally, that same power is here for 8-bit owners. Buy it!

Librarian's Report

Sam Cory - JACG

HELLO PEOPLE! seemed about time you heard from the library. Whats up?? Unless something unusual occurs I will not be able to join with you in receiving the meeting goodies. I miss them and you very much. My mother becomes less able to be left alone. 91 does have its disadvantages.

This month the 8-bit library "crew" came up with a winner if you are a telecommunicator. DETERM. DETERM, the easiest way to become a BBS user. The immediate help screens at any command prompted by ? is wonderfull. No more leafing through pages of docs. It is even easier than TEXTPRO. Never thought I would say that. One key. Just like a GOD. DETERM even has a game to play while you wait for the BBS. DETERM also allows you to do most functions without having a modem. Good practise. In order to accommodate all the files two disks were required. A number of files are modem specific--MPP, XM301, SX212, NO HANDLER. P:R or MIO with an B50 HANDLER is what we present on the first side as DTB50.COM along with the help files. Note there are 63 filenames on that side. Supply your own dos binary load or follow his excellent instructions. PLEASE READ ALL THE DOCS ONCE. THEY ARE EXPLICIT.

For those of you who saw "crew" and pressed ?. Here is the help screen.

The hard working bunch is:

Neil Van Oost, Jr--spends alot of money and time for YOU on Genie and Comuserve. NO one pays him back. I have seen his phone bill of \$100 a month.

Bob Mulhearn -- who gives freely of time and parts to keep our equipment in running condition (BBS and LIBRARY). Also spends much time on Genie and Comuserve. Picks up what Neil misses.

Dave Noyes-- Our Honorable Editor and 8-Bit VP trips to my place once every two weeks or sooner to exchange disks so he can correct errors and have good files to show you. He also goes on the BBS. He will tell you of his conversion from other programs (B50 Express) to DETERM.

David Dvorin, Joe Wyks, Jim Morlock and also a host of people who have left our August ranks can not be left out. Do not forget those who are listed on the back of the newsletters. I would hate to miss a single name (and I somehow will). Without their help your 8-bit library would be scant. Although, it is doing well, it is far from what I want and the future will reveal. We have in excess of 350 disks of untapped files from the efforts of the above good people. A lot you will never see due to duplication, unrunnable, or some like reason. Lots of good stuff.

Notice I have focused on the 8-bit --my love. I can not finish this properly without giving Kudos to those ever working 16-bit people, also part of our growing library. Charlie Miller-- our longest, most suffering librarian. He like the others has spent much time on the BBS, and phone calls to me. Charlie has done a huge amount for YOU.

Linda Peckham-- lost but not forgotten. Why do I have to tell you people how much time is spent BBSing.? She like the others downloaded much for your benefit. Made many new disks from BBS material.

Eric Jacques-- newest 16-bit has gone over every disk to improve them. He had the nerve to get sick (he said) for two weeks just to do that job.

John Dean-- what can I say that is new--nothing. All above applies.

Everyone in our library group gives one huge amount of time and money towards improving the health of ATARI. We would be much better served if ATARI did and felt the same.

Sorry, I took so much of your time. These people need approval from each of you. Without a core of willing workers JACG would not exist. These are some of the core.

Notice Gary Gorski, our venerable President gets to be last. Without his constant attendance to the JACG BBS we probably would not have that magnificent resource up most of the time. Take advantage of his help and the vast quantity of 8 and 16-bit programs ready for downloading. JACG BBS #1-201-298-0161

Nearly forgot. Another disk of the month is an RLE disk to add to your collection..

The usual Analog is January, 1989 Issue #69.

If there is one last Demand -- GET A MODEM, LEARN TO USE IT. We will teach you. Best of all. You now have the best program at the best price.

Sam Cory, JACG LIBRARIAN.

Heh,heh.

<grin>

Ha, Ha, Ha.

```
-----
/      1
/o     1    self
-      1    portrait
1-     1    so you will
1      1    not forget
--     1    how I look
1      1
```

It is a shame the computer can't show how handsome I am. You with your edetic memories will readily fill in the salient details. Those things that impart my Godlike attributes. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!

Local BBS "To pay or not to Pay"

Curtis Evans

This is my first attempt at writing an article for the JACG Newsletter and I am sad to say that it is not the one I intended it to be. Why? Because right now I'm a little upset (No I'm Mad).

Over the past few weekends I have called several BBSs around the country, and on a scale of 1 - 10, 75% of them were asking or telling users to give them money to use their boards. Are these BBSs or are they 'Fund Raisers'? I'm not talking about User Group BBSs or Commercial BBSs such as GEnie or CompuServe. I mean LOCAL boards.

Why do SYSOPS put up a BBS? Just so they can plead and beg for handouts? Or to provide a 'Information Service'? What ever happened to the days when all a SYSOP asked was for USERS and for those who called to inform others about their BBS?

Now don't get me wrong. As a SYSOP of a local BBS myself I can see mentioning donations, but the user should not be REQUIRED to fund the board!! I mean if I want a hard drive, it's up to ME to get it! The gratification should come from knowing that the users are happy and will keep calling back. This way the SYSOP knows that the BBS is not in vain and others are grateful for their efforts.

If the user wishes to donate a few bucks to the BBS then great! But let's not make it a REQUIREMENT. BBSs are supposed to supply INFORMATION not SOLICIT FUNDS. So in closing I'd like to say:
"SYSOPS lets not forget what a BBS is for - it's for "USERS".

Submitted by Curtis Evans, Sysop of the NewArk BBS:
Running 3/12/2400 baud, 24 hrs, 7 days, 201-242-3715

ACTION!

FOR BASIC PROGRAMMERS
Part 4: More on ACTION! Statements
Dave Arlington - JACG

All right, this will be a busy month, so pay attention. We'll be finishing up our look at statements and reserved words in ACTION!, we'll talk all about looping and branching kinds of things, and lastly we'll discuss what ACTION! programs need the cartridge and what ones don't and why.

First, let's look at the complete list of ACTION! reserved words broken up into relevant categories:

PROC marks the beginning of a program or procedure.

FUNC marks the beginning of a function. A function is much like a procedure. We'll discuss them soon.

RETURN marks the end of a program or procedure or function.

ARRAY, BYTE, CARD, CHAR, POINTER, INT, and TYPE all have to do with declaring variables. The CHAR type variable is exactly the same as the BYTE type. It is simply there to make things simpler for people who have used languages like PASCAL or C. POINTER and TYPE are ones that we will be getting to later on.

+, -, *, /, MOD, RSH, LSH, AND, OR, XOR, &, %, !, @, <, >, <=>, <=, >= are all operators on numbers and variables. You should know the first four as add, subtract, multiply, and divide from BASIC. You probably know what AND and OR do from BASIC as well. You should also know all the equality and inequality signs (<, >, =, <=>, <=, >= etc.) The rest of them (MOD, RSH, LSH, XOR, &, %, !, @) will be discussed as they come up.

DO and OD mark the beginning and end of a loop respectively. They are most often used in conjunction with the following reserved words: FOR, TO, STEP, WHILE, UNTIL and EXIT. All these are discussed in detail this month.

IF-THEN, ELSE, ELSEIF, FI are all used in IF-THEN loops. These are all also discussed in detail below.

MODULE, INCLUDE, DEFINE, and SET are all advanced topics that will be covered in future installments.

As you can see above, there are not really that many reserved words in ACTION! Notice that many of the most useful things, like getting input from somebody or printing to the screen, are not present.

All of the input and output routines as well as string handling and ATARI graphics commands are library

routines which we mentioned last month. These are little ACTION! programs or procedures that were written by the authors of ACTION! and included on the cartridge. There is one important difference between the built-in reserved words and those included in the cartridge as library routines.

Load in the Bubble Sort program that was printed in last month's ACTION! column. If you did not type it in, load in or write a short ACTION! program. For the purposes of this column we have been assuming that you load the file and save the file from the editor using Shift-Control-W for writing to disk and Shift-Control-R to read the file from disk. This month we are going to do something different.

Get the file into the editor and go to the monitor by hitting Control-M. Now hit C to compile the program, but instead of going on by hitting R to run the program, type the following:
W "D:BUBBLE.COM" <Return>

This will write your compiled program to disk as a machine language file that you can run from DOS. Try it. Hit D to go to DOS. If you are using SpartaDos or DOS XL, you can run the bubble sort program by typing BUBBLE and hitting return. If you are using DOS 2.5 or MyDOS or something like one of those, hit L for Binary Load, then type BUBBLE.COM and hit return. In either case, the program will begin running.

Now turn the computer off and remove the ACTION! cartridge. Boot up the disk with your BUBBLE.COM file on it and try to load it from DOS now, using the instructions of the previous paragraph. It will not run.

Why not? Well, any ACTION! program written that uses only the capitalized reserved words above do not need the ACTION! cartridge to run. Any program that uses any of the library routines (In our bubble sort program, they were PrintE(), PrintF(), Print(), InputI()) does require the ACTION! cartridge to run. Since the library routines include all the output, input, and graphics commands, you can imagine it is pretty hard to write an ACTION! program that does not require the cartridge.

There is some good news to this. Recently on Genie, a complete Public Domain runtime disk for ACTION! was released. You should get a copy of this disk if possible since it will allow you to take most ACTION! programs you have written with your cartridge and make it a runnable file that any ATARI owner can use. Full instructions on how to use it are on the disk.

There are two aspects to your computer that make it more than a glorified calculator. One is the ability of your computer to make decisions about certain things. Usually these decisions are of the "Is this true or false?" type. The other nice ability is the ability to

perform some task over and over a certain number of times. When we combine these two features, your computer becomes even more powerful.

Let's look at the first type, decision-making. In ATARI BASIC, this is the familiar IF-THEN statement as in:
100 IF X=5 THEN SCORE=SCORE+10

which checks to see if the value of X is 5 and if it is, it adds 10 to score. If X is 5 then it adds 10 to score and then goes to the next line. If X is not 5 then it just goes to the next line. The IF-THEN statement has some very severe restrictions that make it very weak in ATARI BASIC.

For instance, if The condition is true, we can only execute as many statements as we can fit on the same line with the IF-THEN statement. What if we wanted to do 7 or 8 different things when X was equal to 5? Then you have to either use a subroutine or some very complicated GOTOs. Like so:

```
100 IF X=5 THEN GOSUB 1000
110 REM Next statement in program

1000 REM 1st thing
1010 REM 2nd thing
      ;These are just examples of course!
1020 REM 3rd thing
1030 etc. etc.
.
.
.
1100 RETURN
```

In TURBO BASIC and ACTION! this is handled much better. In TURBO BASIC and ACTION! we mark the end of the stuff we want to do with either an ENDDIF in TURBO BASIC or FI (backwards IF) in ACTION! Like so:

```
TURBO BASIC--

100 IF X=5 THEN
110 REM 1st thing
120 REM 2nd thing
130 REM 3rd thing
.
.
190 ENDDIF
200 REM Next statement in program

ACTION!--

IF x=5 THEN
; 1st thing
; 2nd thing
; 3rd thing
```



```

FI
; Next statement in program

```

The next problem with IF-THEN in ATARI BASIC is this: What if you want to do one thing if the condition is true and do something else if the condition is false? For example, if X is equal to 5, add 10 to score, else if X is not equal to 5, subtract 10 from score. In ATARI BASIC, after we check the condition, we go to the next line whether the condition is true or not. For Example:

```

100 IF X=5 THEN SCORE=SCORE+10
110 SCORE=SCORE-10

```

does not work right since if X is equal to 5, we add 10 to score and then go directly to the next line where we promptly subtract it again! To fix it in ATARI BASIC you have to do some clumsy stuff like this:

```

100 IF X=5 THEN SCORE=SCORE+10:GOTO 120
110 SCORE=SCORE-10
120 REM Next statement

```

or

```

100 IF X=5 THEN SCORE=SCORE+10
110 IF X<>5 THEN SCORE=SCORE-10

```

Both pretty awkward and ugly looking. Plus the same limitation from above holds if you want to do more than one thing if X is equal to 5, or more than one thing if X is not equal to 5. TURBO BASIC and ACTION! add a logical extension to the IF-THEN pair with the ELSE command. It looks like below and should be pretty clear on how it works since it works just like it sounds.

TURBO BASIC--

```

100 IF X=5 THEN
110 SCORE=SCORE+10
120 ELSE
130 SCORE=SCORE-10
140 ENDIF

```

ACTION!--

```

IF X=5 THEN Score==+10 ;Remember what this does from
last month??
ELSE
Score== -10
FI

```

One other nice thing you can do with both TURBO BASIC and ACTION! that I won't even attempt to try in ATARI BASIC is this: What if you want to do one or more things if X is equal to 5, one or more different things if X is equal to, let's say 10, and one or more different things if it isn't 5 OR 10? We can use something called ELSEIF that is in both TURBO BASIC and ACTION! It works like this example:

ACTION!--

```

IF X=5 THEN Score==+10
ELSEIF X=10 THEN
Score==+20
ELSE
Score== -10
FI

```

There are of course many different things you can do in ACTION! and TURBO BASIC with this combination of IF-ELSE- ELSEIF-FI statements. Hopefully you've seen enough ways to get started. You'll see these statements used many times over the course of this series in the programs we print here.

On to the looping commands. As I mentioned before, looping means to repeat a series of instructions over and over until some condition comes true. Unlike the IF statements above, I will not waste time going into all the ways ATARI BASIC falls short in this area. Instead we will concentrate on how to do things in the REAL languages like ACTION! and TURBO BASIC.

ALL loops in ACTION! have the same structure. They all use the word DO to mark where the loop starts and OD (backwards DO) to mark where it ends. The first type of loop and the most simple of all is the loop that never ends and repeats forever. It looks like this:

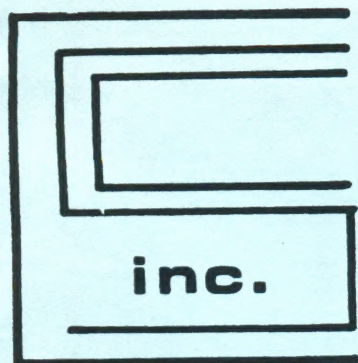
```

DO
;Stuff you want to do
.
.
.
OD

```

In TURBO BASIC it works the same way except instead of OD marking the end of the loop, TURBO uses the word LOOP instead. Now you might be wondering why anybody would want a loop that goes forever. Both ACTION! and TURBO BASIC give us an escape route out of the infinite loop. We'll discuss what it is and when and why we use it in a couple paragraphs.

Continued next month

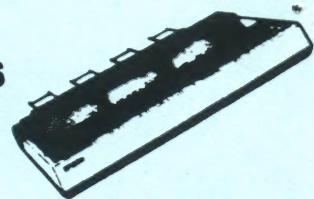
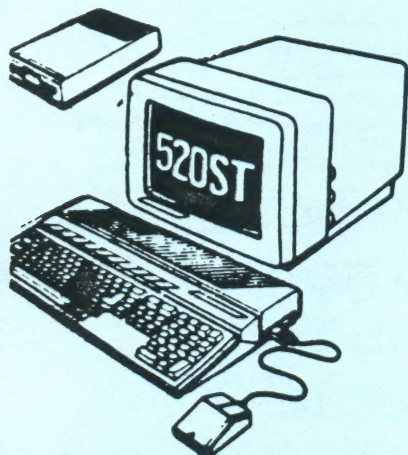


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